Most of the UNRRA food supplies delivered to the Ukraine are distributed to ration stores for sale to workers and their dependants. A large proportion (about 35 per cent.) also goes for communal feeding through dining rooms, health resorts, homes for invalids and the aged, and dining halls of trade schools. Hospitals, childrens' homes, maternity homes, and the like also receive a share (around 10 per cent.) (The food distributed to welfare organizations is delivered free of charge).

Apart from the food which UNRRA supplies, the Ukrainian people are dependent on whatever amounts of local produce may appear on various markets. According to the rationing system, the farmers are allowed to retain part of their produce to feed themselves and their dependants, and the farm's livestock; the state then purchases a certain quota for use in feeding the non-farm population. If any surplus then remains, the farmers may keep it, or sell it on the free market at uncontrolled prices.

In practice, however, because of the extremely poor harvests in the last two years, Ukrainian farmers have scarcely been able to feed even themselves; and the amounts of domestically produced food which reach the ration stores or the free market have consequently been small.

The following section describes the sources of food supply open to the urban consumers.

The System of Food Distribution

In the cities of the Ukraine there are three outlets through which foodstuffs reach the population:

(a) the ration stores, where the bulk of foodstuffs are sold at fixed prices to ration-coupon holders;

(b) the so-called gastronoms (commercial stores) where scarce, luxury items are sold; and

(c) the public markets, where collective farmers and peasants bring their surplus produce for sale.

Most of the rural areas and villages of the Ukraine are expected to produce locally enough food to feed the inhabitants; and as they are nearly all considered to be self-supplying, they receive through the central distribution system only sugar and sometimes bread. Their surplus farm produce (that is, food in excess of that needed for feeding people or livestock on the farm and not subject to collection or purchase by the state) is usually brought by the farmers to the public markets for sale to the urban population. The quantities of produce and the variety of items available in the free public markets vary greatly from season to season and from day to day; prices are equally variable.